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## **2000 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Indonesia**

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### **INDONESIA**

The Constitution provides for religious freedom for members of five of the six officially recognized religions and belief in one supreme God, and the Government generally respects these provisions; however, there are some restrictions on certain types of religious activity, including unrecognized religions. The law officially "embraces" six religions--Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. The Government generally respects the freedom to worship of adherents to each of these religions. Presidential Decree No. 6, promulgated in January 2000, lifted severe legal restrictions on the practice of Confucianism that had existed since 1967. While only these six religions are recognized officially, the law states that other religions are not forbidden. A few groups are banned explicitly, including Jehovah's Witnesses, whose adherents may experience difficulty processing civil matters like marriage. Likewise, citizens who are members of religions other than the six officially recognized may be obliged to identify themselves as Catholics, Muslims, etc., in order to obtain national identity cards or process other civil matters.

The Government's level of respect for religious freedom remained generally constant during the period covered by this report; however, religious intolerance within society became markedly more visible and was manifested in scores of violent incidents in Maluku, Sulawesi, Lombok, and elsewhere.

There were numerous attacks on churches in various locations throughout the country, ranging from minor damage to total destruction; only a few cases, if any, were investigated thoroughly, and there were no reports that any perpetrators were punished. Mosques also were targeted for attack in some instances, especially during the ongoing interreligious strife in North Maluku and Maluku provinces (also known as the Molucca Islands), and around Poso, Central Sulawesi. Religious intolerance led to violence in several regions, particularly in the Moluccas and Central Sulawesi. It generally is estimated that approximately 4,000 persons have been killed in the Moluccas strife since violence erupted in January 1999. The victims were roughly equally divided between Christians and Muslims. In addition to intercommunal violence in Maluku and North Maluku provinces, significant religious conflict also occurred on the islands of Sulawesi and Lombok. Churches and other Christian facilities continued to be targeted for attack in Java, where Muslims are a majority, although not to the extent to which they were targeted in 1996-97.

The U.S. discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

## Section I. Government Policies on Freedom of Religion

### Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for religious freedom for members of five of the six officially recognized religions and belief in one supreme God, and the Government generally respects these provisions; however, there are some restrictions on certain types of religious activity, including unrecognized religions. Law No. 1/1965 states that the Government "embraces" Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Law No. 14/1967 on Chinese Worship, Religion and Customs restricted severely the practice of Confucianism by, for example, confining Chinese worship, religion and customs to the home and temple; however, in January 2000, Presidential Decree No. 6/2000 revoked the 1967 restrictive legislation. While the law formally "embraces" only these six religions, it explicitly states that other religions, including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, and Taoism are not forbidden. The Government permits the practice of other religions, including Sikhism and the mystical, traditional beliefs called "Aliran Kepercayaan." The Government bans other faiths, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and some Islamic groups. The People's Consultative Assembly adopted a new Human Rights Charter in November 1998 which provides citizens the freedom to practice their religion, without specifying any particular religions.

The legal requirement to adhere to the official state ideology, "Pancasila," extends to all religious and secular organizations. Because the first tenet of Pancasila is belief in one supreme God, atheism is forbidden. Although individuals are not compelled to practice any particular faith, all citizens must classify themselves as members of one of the six officially recognized religions. As this choice must be noted on official documents, such as the identification card, failure to identify a religion can make it impossible to obtain such documents. Members of other religious communities must be identified with one of the six sanctioned religions. For example, Sikhs generally are classified as Hindus. Prior to the passage of Presidential Decree No. 6/2000, Confucians were required to identify themselves as one of the other officially recognized religions; however, according to domestic news reports, as of May 2000, approximately 100 persons had succeeded in obtaining recognition as adherents of Confucianism on their identification cards.

The Government continues to oppose strongly any Muslim group that advocates the establishment of an Islamic state or the supplanting of civil law with Shari'a (Islamic law). However, at times it was reluctant to challenge extreme Muslim groups openly (see Section II).

### Religious Demography

The population, estimated at 211,000,000 persons, is approximately 85 percent Muslim, 10 percent Christian, 2 percent Hindu, and 1 to 1.5 percent Buddhist, with the remainder members of other religions. Animism still is practiced in remote regions of Kalimantan and Papua (also known as Irian Jaya).

Muslims are the majority population in most regions of Sumatra and Java. Muslims also predominate in regions of Sulawesi and Kalimantan and are present as minorities in most other parts of the country. The vast majority of Muslims are Sunni, although there also are Shi'a and adherents of Sufism, Ahmadiyah, and other branches of Islam. The Muslim community primarily breaks down into two groups: "modernist," mainly urban communities, which adhere more closely to orthodox Sunni theology, and larger "traditionalist" communities, composed mainly of rural Javanese Muslims, who incorporate some elements of Javanese mysticism, Hinduism, and Buddhism into their practice of Islam.

Most Christians reside in the eastern part of the country. Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion in the provinces of Nusa Tenggara Timur and southeast Maluku, while Protestantism is the predominant religion in central and north Maluku. In the easternmost province of Papua, Protestants are predominant in the north, and Catholics are the majority in the south. Other significant Christian populations are located in North

Sumatra, seat of the influential Batak Protestant Church, which in early 1999 reunited after a government-manipulated division in 1993. There also are significant Christian populations in west and central Java, and in Kalimantan. Many urban Sino-Indonesians adhere to Christian faiths as well.

Migration, both government-sponsored and spontaneous, gradually is increasing the Muslim population in the eastern part of the country. Some Christian critics have alleged that the Government has attempted to alter the demographic balance of the eastern part of the country by resettling Muslims in the area and providing various subsidies for those who settle spontaneously. The critics claim that growing communal violence in eastern Indonesia is a product of this policy (see Section II). However, government programs have not sponsored most Muslims who have moved into the region.

Most Hindus live in Bali, where they form about 93 percent of the population. Balinese Hinduism has developed various local characteristics that distinguish it from Hinduism as practiced on the Indian subcontinent. There also is a significant Hindu minority (the Keharingan) in central Kalimantan.

Seven schools of Buddhism are practiced in the country: Buddhayana, Mahayana, Theravada, Tridharma, Kasogatan, Nichiren, and Maitreya. Most, but not all, Buddhists are of ethnic Chinese origin. Like the Sino-Indonesian population, most Buddhists are located in major urban and trading centers, rather than rural areas.

The Government actively promotes mutual tolerance and harmony among officially recognized religions. Citizens practicing the recognized religions maintain active links with coreligionists inside and outside the country and travel abroad for religious gatherings. The Government both facilitates and regulates Muslims' participation in the annual Hajj pilgrimages to Mecca.

For the first time since the beginning of the Soeharto regime, religiously oriented parties, predominantly Islamic but including some Christian, were allowed to form and to contest the June 1999 parliamentary elections. Christian parties received relatively few votes; Muslim parties won about 30 percent of the vote. Of the Muslim parties, those with moderate views on the role of Islam in government and society dominated. Parties that strongly advocated an Islamization of government policy won a small percentage of the vote and few parliamentary seats.

#### Governmental Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Restrictions exist on certain types of religious activity, including restrictions on officially recognized religions. For example, a number of regulations enacted subsequent to the passage of Law No. 1/1965 severely restrict some religious groups. Moreover, a 1976 decision by the Attorney General, reinforced by a separate decision by the same office in 1978, banned Jehovah's Witnesses from practicing their faith. Jehovah's Witnesses claim that significant abuse, including detention and torture, lasted until 1997. Although government hostility toward Jehovah's Witnesses has subsided, open practice of the faith remains banned, and members report that they continue to experience difficulty registering marriages, enrolling children in school, and in other civil matters. The Government in some provinces banned the messianic Islamic school, Darul Arqam; the Government also bans the Al-Ma'Unah school in some provinces. Members of the Baha'i faith did not report problems during the period covered by this report. The Government closely monitors Islamic groups considered to be deviating from orthodox tenets and in the past has dissolved such groups. Historically, the Government has tried to control "heterodox" Muslim groups, due to pressure by nongovernmental leaders of "mainstream" or "orthodox" Muslim groups as well as the Government's concern for national unity. In addition "mainstream" Christian leaders have influenced government policy against "fundamentalist" Christians. Non-Trinitarians (Jehovah's Witnesses) have faced government bans that they claim were instigated by Trinitarian Christians. After the passage of Presidential Decree No. 6/2000, Confucianists, who in the past were restricted severely, were permitted to celebrate publicly the Chinese New Year for the first time in over 30 years.

A 1969 regulation dictates that before a house of worship can be built, agreement must be obtained from local residents living near the site, and a license must be obtained from the regional office of the Ministry of Religion. Some Christians claim that this regulation is used to discriminate against them and to prevent them from building churches. Despite the problems, the building of churches continued, sometimes without permits. Muslims contend that Christians, in some instances, seek to erect churches in areas with small Christian populations with the aim of creating a base in a Muslim area in order to proselytize.

The law allows for conversion between faiths, and such conversions do occur. Independent observers note that it has become increasingly difficult to gain official recognition of interfaith marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims. Persons from religions outside the six accepted religions also have difficulty in getting their marriages recognized officially.

The Government views proselytizing by recognized religions in areas heavily dominated by another recognized religion as potentially disruptive and discourages it. Foreign missionary activities are relatively unimpeded, although in Papua, and occasionally elsewhere, missionaries have experienced difficulties and delays in renewing residence permits. In addition visas allowing the entrance of new foreign clergy sometimes are difficult to obtain. Foreigners present in the country holding tourist visas may be deported for proselytizing. Laws and decrees from the 1970's limit the number of years that foreign missionaries can spend in the country; some extensions were granted in remote areas like Papua. Foreign missionary work is subject to the funding stipulations of the 1984 ORMAS law, which regulates the activities of all nongovernment "mass" organizations in the country.

The October 1999 election of Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid as President was greeted with optimism by Christians and members of other religious minority groups because of his longstanding advocacy of religious tolerance and harmony. In addition to Muslims, Wahid appointed Christians, a Hindu, and a Buddhist to his Cabinet. Wahid continued actively to promote tolerance as President, and demonstrated his commitment to religious freedom by calling on leaders of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and others during their religious festivals.

The Government's level of respect for religious freedom remained generally constant during the period covered by this report; however, religious intolerance within society became markedly more visible and was manifested in scores of violent incidents in Maluku, Sulawesi, Lombok, and elsewhere (see Section II).

The most widespread interreligious violence erupted in the Moluccas, where several hundred houses of worship, both mosques and churches, were destroyed and thousands of persons were killed as Christians and Muslims waged an internecine conflict (see Section II).

#### Governmental Abuses of Religious Freedom

Religious violence and the lack of an effective government response to punish perpetrators and prevent further attacks led to allegations that officials were complicit in some of the incidents or, at a minimum, allowed them to occur with impunity. Although the President and other officials repeatedly have criticized instances of interreligious violence, the Government's efforts to end or reduce such violence generally have not been effective. The Government continued to demonstrate reluctance to intervene in mob attacks on houses of worship. Security forces proved ineffective in controlling the violence in North Maluku and Maluku provinces, where both Christians and Muslims repeatedly were targeted for attack on the basis of their religion and ethnic group.

In North Maluku and Maluku provinces Christian sources alleged that elements of the security forces were biased against them. For example, predominantly Muslim units dispatched from Java and Sulawesi allegedly sided with Muslim vigilantes and used excessive force against Christians. In other instances, security forces appeared to be

biased against Muslims. For example, Muslims on Ambon charged that members of the predominantly Christian police force also were partial in helping their coreligionists. There was no evidence to suggest that the security forces, as an institution, supported one side or the other. Some individuals and some units occasionally sided with their coreligionists, but their actions appeared to be random and contrary to orders. In fact some military troops were detained and interrogated for allegedly openly siding with militia in at least one episode on Haruku; however, there were no reports that such perpetrators ever were punished. Several hundred police officers have themselves been attacked, and some even killed because of their religion; hundreds of police members and their families, as well as numerous other government officials, are among the refugees.

Reviving a centuries-old Ambonese practice, in March 2000, the provincial government enlisted Muslims and Christians to cooperate in the reconstruction of two major places of worship that were destroyed during rioting, Silo Church and An'nur Mosque (see Section II). In a highly publicized ceremony, the governor, the Vice President, and others, presided over the laying of cornerstones for each building. However, as of mid-2000, workers had made little progress.

In response to heightened violence in the Moluccas in the first half of 2000 (see Section II), on June 23, 2000, President Wahid banned all travel to the Moluccas; on June 26, 2000, the President declared a state of civil emergency. However, during the period covered by this report, the Government was unable to suppress the violence or fully contain the flow of fighters and weapons to the Moluccas.

In contrast the governors of the provinces of Sulawesi, working with military and police leaders, responded to the outbreak of communal violence in the Poso area in the first quarter of 2000 by implementing a comprehensive program to prevent the violence from spreading. This response included investigation and detention of suspects, comprehensive weapons searches, and an effort to return refugees to their home villages as soon as possible. As of mid-2000, this response seemed to have halted the cycle of retaliation.

In East Timor, before and after the August 30, 1999 vote in favor of independence, pro-Indonesia militias killed numerous Catholic priests and nuns who were engaged in humanitarian activities and destroyed many Catholic places of worship, many of which were being used to shelter thousands of internally displaced persons (IDP's). In general the abuses were not motivated by religious differences but by pro-Indonesia militia groups' efforts to discourage a vote for independence and later to take revenge after their efforts failed.

There were no reports of religious detainees or prisoners during the period covered by this report.

In the summer of 1999, two Christians, one a pastor, one a parishioner, were sentenced to 5-to-10 year prison terms in a sensational case in Padang, West Sumatra. Salmon Ongirwale was convicted of kidnaping in connection with his relationship with a Muslim woman, then a minor. The pastor was convicted as an accomplice. Some members of the Muslim community, including the woman's parents, alleged that the two persons had plotted to kidnap their daughter and force her to convert to Christianity. Members of the Christian community alleged that the defendants had been charged and tried unfairly, and were singled out for such harsh treatment because they were Christians.

#### Forced Religious Conversion of Minor U.S. Citizens

There were no reports of the forced religious conversion of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

### Section II. Societal Attitudes

The concept of religious freedom generally is accepted within society. Religious organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), and individuals regularly conduct

programs and activities aimed at promoting tolerance and cooperation between different religious communities. In the political sphere, leading government and opposition political figures regularly address the need for interreligious harmony. Several of the major political opposition parties and the current ruling coalition are nonsectarian.

There were markedly fewer reports of specifically anti-Chinese violence during the period covered by this report. While attacks on ethnic Chinese churches clearly reflect religious tensions, other contributing factors are underlying socioeconomic and political tensions between Muslims and relatively more affluent Sino-Indonesians.

During the period covered by this report, groups that actively advocate a more prominent role for Islam in society continued to emerge. However, there currently is minimal public support for the establishment of an Islamic state. The Government continues to oppose Muslim groups that advocate the establishment of an Islamic state or the supplanting of civil law with Shari'a (Islamic law). However, some Islamic political parties and Islamic groups advocate the establishment of what they describe as "an Islamic society."

In early 2000, a movement known as the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) emerged on university campuses in Java. There were sporadic reports from some neighborhoods of Jakarta that student followers of the NII movement set up roadblocks, checked identification cards, and harassed passing non-Muslims, in some cases forcing them to recite passages from the Koran. Similar incidents took place in Makassar, South Sulawesi.

Another Muslim group that appeared in early 2000, the Laskar Jihad ("holy war troops") engaged in paramilitary training and moved about freely, armed with swords, daggers, and spears. Some members of the movement reportedly believed that they could "enter heaven by killing infidels." Leaders of the group announced that they were planning to wage war on Christians in the Moluccas. The Government clearly was reluctant to challenge them openly. The Government did close a conspicuous Laskar Jihad training camp south of Jakarta, but as of June 2000, the group had not been disbanded. Many of its recruits were deployed to Maluku and North Maluku provinces starting in late April 2000; some continued training elsewhere. In Yogyakarta, central Java, members of the Laskar Jihad openly called for intervention in the Moluccas, while others collected funds for Laskar Jihad on street corners.

There were numerous instances of attacks on churches, mosques, temples, and other religious facilities between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000. Christian groups recorded 135 attacks in which churches and other Christian facilities were closed, damaged, or burned during this time (including the violence in the Moluccas and Sulawesi). The attacks ranged in severity from broken windowpanes to total destruction. For example, on December 15, 1999, Muslim crowds burned and ransacked a Christian seminary and a social service complex in southeast Jakarta, killing 1 person in the process and injuring 20 others. According to many Christian officials, the anti-Christian sentiment behind this violence is not new, but the impunity associated with such acts is. This has contributed significantly to such attacks since Soeharto resigned in May 1998. There are no available national estimates of how many mosques were damaged or destroyed during the period covered by this report. The Government did not investigate fully most cases of attacks on religious facilities that occurred during riots, and in other cases, did not investigate such incidents at all.

There also were reports of preaching and publications against Christians, which led to concerns that societal support for religious tolerance was under pressure.

In the Jakarta and other incidents, interethnic tensions, as well as interreligious tensions, were factors that contributed to the violence. Other factors included a general breakdown in civil and military authority and a concomitant rise in societal violence, as citizens took justice into their own hands. Security forces, which have been criticized widely for previous human rights violations, for reasons such as lack of training, fear of criticism, and the potential for legal restriction, showed reluctance to intervene, as they routinely did under previous regimes, to stop religious and ethnic disputes from turning violent.

During the period covered by this report, thousands of citizens were attacked by other citizens, and according to multiple sources (at times, official) perhaps as many as 4,000 to 5,000 persons were killed, largely because of their religious identity in North Maluku and Maluku provinces and in Central Sulawesi province in the eastern part of the country. Over 300,000 persons were displaced internally. Some Christian IDP's from Ambon fled to the southeastern part of the province; others fled to North Maluku; and many others fled to North Sulawesi province, which is predominantly Christian in many areas. Muslim IDP's from Ambon fled to parts of North Maluku; others fled to South and Southeast Sulawesi provinces. Many of these IDP's carried the conflict with them.

In North Maluku alone, provincial statistics listed 97 mosques and 106 churches burned, as Christians and Muslims waged an internecine conflict. Other mosques and churches were attacked and many destroyed in parts of Maluku province and in Poso, Central Sulawesi. This represented the most widespread interreligious violence during the period covered by this report. The fighting in all three provinces had political, economic, ethnic, and religious overtones. While initial conflicts emerged over land tenure issues and the political and economic status of local residents versus transmigrants, in many cases the conflicts later evolved into highly charged religious clashes.

Interreligious fighting in the Moluccas, which began in Ambon on January 19, 1999, spread in sporadic but steady waves from Ambon to neighboring islands in the central and southern areas of the Moluccas from July to December 1999. The use of firearms, mostly homemade but increasingly sophisticated, grew, as did the number of deaths. Buildings in the central business district of Ambon, many of them Chinese-owned, were destroyed in late July 1999 and early August 1999, marking the first time that major fighting spread from outlying neighborhoods. Allegations of outside provocation and interference rose during this period, and authorities came under increasing criticism for failing to halt the violence or actively abetting it (see Section I).

From December 1999 and continuing to June 30, 2000, religious clashes rapidly spread to most major islands in the Moluccas. Violence erupted in North Maluku province after Christmas as Christian gangs and militia (and to a lesser extent, Muslim gangs and militia) launched offensives against isolated villages.

Meanwhile, IDP's fleeing conflict-torn areas of Ambon island poured into the city of Ambon. Many directed their anger against Ambon; extensive damage resulted in which numerous houses, shops, and places of worship were burned. Predominantly Muslim military units dispatched from Java and Sulawesi were accused of siding with Muslim vigilantes and using excessive force against Christians. Muslims on Ambon charged that the predominantly Christian police force also was acting with bias (see Section I), and Christian gangs also were guilty of severe attacks.

On December 28, 1999, Christian militia invaded a small Muslim town in north Halmahera Island (North Maluku province) and massacred at least 113 men, women, and children in and around a mosque. Several hundred more persons died in other attacks, apparently initiated by Christian gangs.

Following the December 1999 incident, Muslims became more militant. During the first half of the year 2000, they drove Christian populations away from many areas of North Maluku and Maluku provinces. As IDP's fled to neighboring areas and islands, their resentment against those who had attacked them often sparked conflict in their new places of residence.

In response to the increased violence, the armed forces deployed fresh troops to the Moluccas in January 2000. In Ambon, army, marines, and police personnel enforced a curfew and began disarming civilians in house-to-house searches. By late January 2000, a semblance of normality had returned to Ambon. However, internecine fighting escalated in Halmahera and other parts of North Maluku (including Bacan, Obi, and Morotai islands) and in Maluku (Seram and Buru islands).

By April 2000, there were some signs of reconciliation in Ambon as the provincial

government inaugurated reconstruction programs and markets were established in border areas. The cease-fire in Ambon abruptly ended in late April 2000, when serious rioting immediately broke out upon the conclusion of Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri's visit. There was a further upsurge in violence in mid-May as boatloads of Laskar Jihad volunteers (ultimately reaching 2,000 to 3,000 persons) began arriving in Ambon and other parts of the Moluccas. Periodic waves of violence and destruction continued in Ambon during the weeks that followed. Law and order continued to deteriorate steadily, all but collapsing by late June 2000, when violent mobs stormed through the city with little or no interference by the security forces.

In May and June 2000, there were large-scale Muslim attacks against Christians in Halmahera, in apparent revenge for the January 2000 massacre. There were further allegations that the security forces were taking sides in the fighting (see Section I). For example, on June 19, 2000, about 4,000 Muslims surrounded the town of Duma and killed from 110 to 180 largely defenseless Christians before burning down their church. Laskar Jihad later claimed that it was involved, but locally based Muslim groups primarily were responsible. The military forces admitted that they stood aside because troops were outnumbered (officials have alleged that only 70 to 100 troops were available at the time). Other witnesses (including a local Laskar Jihad leader) claimed that at least six soldiers joined the Muslims in the attack. However, troops were able to prevent 300 Christian gang members from counterattacking days later.

On June 23, 2000, President Wahid announced a ban on all travel to Maluku and North Maluku provinces; however, the ban was enforced loosely. On June 26, 2000, the President declared a state of civil emergency for both provinces (see Section I).

It is estimated that over 2,000 persons died in the Moluccas between January and June 2000, and that 300,000 persons, or 15 percent of the population, were displaced internally. These population movements have resulted, in effect, in the partition of the Moluccas into Muslim and Christian areas. For example, in Ternate the original population of 105,000 persons included 15,000 Christians. During the period covered by this report, all Christians fled, and 80,000 Muslim IDP's arrived from elsewhere in the same province.

While religious tension and hatreds have been the main sources of intercommunal warfare in the Moluccas, the conflict partly is rooted in social, political, and economic grievances among the many diverse communities living there. In some cases, Muslims and Christians from the same or affiliated ethnic groups banded together and attacked Muslim migrants from another, distant ethnic group. This phenomenon occurred in Halmahera in the clash between the villages of Kao (local Christian and Muslim ethnic groups) and Malifut (largely settled by Muslim transmigrants from the island of Makian). In addition unverified reports of provocators and conspiracies have fueled what has become a continuous cycle of violence. Both sides claim that outside agitators helped trigger the violence. Both insist that coreligionists fought back only after being assaulted by persons of the opposite religion. Furthermore, traditional leadership structures have eroded, leaving conflicting groups without a respected and effective mechanism for resolving intercommunal and interreligious tensions.

In January 2000, there were anti-Christian riots in Mataram, Lombok. Several rioters were killed and numerous persons were injured in the violence. In addition Muslim gangs destroyed, damaged, and looted Christian homes, businesses, and other property. Thousands of Christians fled the violence. However, by the end of January 2000 the situation became calmer, and as of June 30, 2000, reports of further violence were rare; nevertheless, tensions remained.

Small-scale rioting broke out in pockets of Makassar, South Sulawesi on January 17 and 18, 2000. The problem began when about 2,000 Muslim gang members began stopping motorists in front of Hasanuddin University, demanding identification to determine religious affiliation, and in at least six cases, dragging out and beating Christians "in retaliation for what happened to their brothers in Maluku."

On January 30, 2000, there was a series of attacks on churches in Yogyakarta, central



Java. The problem began after a Muslim rally of from 10,000 to 20,000 persons to protest the interreligious violence in the Moluccas ended. Hundreds of participants drove through the city on motorcycles and threw rocks through the windows of eight churches, a Christian campus dormitory, and two houses.

Beginning in late May 2000, the area of Poso in Central Sulawesi, as well as numerous villages in the region, experienced renewed religious riots and violence, resulting in numerous deaths and widespread destruction. Christian gangs from surrounding villages reportedly expelled Muslims from the town of Poso in retaliation for past hostilities, which included the burning of hundreds of Christians' houses in the preceding months. In the most serious incident, Christian gangs brutally murdered well over 100 unarmed Muslims in a small village outside Poso. Foreign Christian missionaries, who were worried about the possible spread of religious violence, fled Central Sulawesi. While Christian gangs and militia burned mosques and Muslim houses, Muslim gangs and militia reportedly burned what Christian property they could while fleeing town. As of June 10, 2000, over 120 persons were confirmed dead. The most recent casualty estimate listed 214 victims, and casualty estimates ranged as high as 500 persons dead. Over 2,000 houses were destroyed in the Poso area. Both Christian and Muslim outsiders were accused of helping to instigate the violence.

Between July 1999 and July 2000, there were a number of reports of persons who practice traditional medicine magic ("dukun santets") being killed. In the Malang area of East Java, villagers broke into the home of suspected shamans in the middle of the night on January 18, 2000, and beat to death a 45-year-old woman in front of her teenage sons. The mob then dragged her body to a cemetery and hung it from a tree, where it hung until dawn. That morning, 200 villagers turned themselves in to the local police station. The police stated that they were searching for the "true instigators" of the violence; no arrests were made. Since then, more individuals were attacked for suspected shamanism in the Pasuruan area of East Java. While it is difficult to estimate accurately the frequency of such attacks, journalists believe that lynch killings still occur. Aside from killings, "dukun santets" faced other constraints on their freedom. For example, in Banyuwangi, East Java, many known shamans essentially were forced (by the authorities) to migrate to Bali to get them out of "harm's way." Many others were forced to renounce their craft by local Muslim leaders who told them that it was forbidden by Muslim law.

In West Kalimantan, 40,000 persons who were displaced by communal fighting in early 1999 remained in temporary camps as of June 2000. They were displaced as a result of clashes between groups composed of Dayaks (mostly Christian or animist) and Melayu (mostly Muslim) on one side and Madurese migrants (Muslims) on the other. Ethnic differences and tensions between indigenous people and newcomers appeared to be the source of the conflict, rather than religious differences.

Muslims are a religious minority in the easternmost province of Papua (also known as Irian Jaya). Local sentiment against the efforts of Muslim missionaries to win converts in the predominantly Christian province, as well as resentment of the arrival in the province of mainly Muslim migrants from other parts of the country either under government sponsored "transmigration" programs or with the encouragement of various government incentives, has in the past led to attacks on mosques in Papua. However, there were no reports of attacks on mosques in Papua during the period covered by this report. Nevertheless, tensions stemming from ethnic differences and economic disparities remain and sometimes are expressed in religious terms.

### **Section III. U.S. Government Policy**

The U.S. Government publicly criticized the intercommunal violence that occurred in various parts of the country by continually: expressing its deep concern with the ongoing cycle of violence and retaliation between Christian and Muslim communities in the Moluccas and elsewhere; urging the Government to take further measures to prevent bloodshed and take action against those who initiate violence, while adhering to international standards for the protection of human rights and exercising appropriate restraint; and calling on all parties to show restraint, refrain from violence, and resolve

their differences through dialog and negotiation.

With respect to the violence between Christian and Muslim communities in the Moluccas, Central Sulawesi, and elsewhere, President Clinton and other senior U.S. Government officials raised their concerns with Indonesian counterparts on numerous occasions.

The Ambassador and embassy and consulate Surabaya staff routinely conveyed to government officials at all levels the U.S. view that religious freedom must be respected. In addition throughout the period covered by this report, the Ambassador and embassy and consulate staff regularly met with leaders of religious communities and traveled widely throughout the country to keep abreast of developments affecting religious freedom.

During the period covered by this report, the public affairs section of the Embassy funded the travel of several persons under the International Visitors program, as well as exchange visitors, to study human rights and religion in the U.S., among other topics. They included religious and student leaders, and legal activists from Aceh, Papua, East Timor, and other locations. The Fulbright Commission in Indonesia funded one senior U.S. scholar to teach comparative religion at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) in Jakarta and a senior U.S. scholar/researcher who studied and taught women's role in Koranic verse at the same institution.

The U.S. Government also provides significant funding for NGO's that implement projects to promote religious tolerance in various parts of the country.

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